

CAMP WEEDONWANTCHA

by Katie Rice
and
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**Kids who don't belong,
belong at Camp Weedonwantcha.**



Camp Weedonwantcha

Greetings from Camp Weedonwantcha! A summer camp where kids are dropped off and never picked up again. And so what if the food is only so-so, a few cabins are missing roofs, and there's a constant threat of animal attack? There are absolutely no adults! So, how bad can it be?

Without adults around to spoil things, the campers are able to get into whatever type of fun mischief they can think of. On the other hand, it means they've only got each other to rely on if things don't go to plan. And at Camp Weedonwantcha, things have a tendency to not go to plan.

The camp might not be perfect, but neither are the campers. They were all brought to camp because there's something about them that made them not quite fit in at home. These traits might have made the campers feel isolated or insecure before, but at Weedonwantcha, they're what brings everyone together.

In fact, three such misfits found each other, and have struck up an unlikely friendship...



Malachi



Earnest, overconfident, and approximately 53% as smart as he thinks he is. In Malachi's humble opinion, he is the answer to all of Camp Weedonwantcha's problems. Being viewed as a genius hero is priority number one for Malachi, and he so badly wants to do good that he doesn't always notice the bad he's doing in the process. In his time at Weedonwantcha, he will learn to avoid being selfish in his attempts at selflessness.

Malachi (cont'd)



Malachi is Camp Weedonwantcha's newest camper. His life before camp was one of academic pressures and unreasonable expectations. Malachi lived with a single mom who dreamed he'd be a great genius, but when he turned out to be just sort of average, she made it clear that he was a disappointment. As a result, he craves validation (though he'd never admit that), so it is very important that others know how smart he is. This leads to him sometimes being pedantic and brash, but beneath the arrogant exterior is an insecure boy who just wants to be admired. Unfortunately, how Malachi views himself is vastly different from how others see him, and the more he tries to impress people, the more he embarrasses himself. The majority of Malachi's problems come as a result of his boundless confidence in his own abilities and ideas, causing him to leap before he looks. He is under the impression that being seen as intellectual far outweighs the importance of listening to his heart.

Making friends has never been Malachi's strong suit, so he's new to the whole concept of being one. Growing up, he didn't witness many selfless behaviors, so he doesn't always recognize how selfish he can be. This is evident in his interactions with his two closest friends, Brian and Seventeen. He unfortunately takes their feelings for granted until he sees firsthand how his behavior has affected them. Like most kids, he is kind and loyal, so he will always end up doing the right thing.

Seventeen



Curious, blindly optimistic, and two steps above feral.

Seventeen assumes the best of everyone and can find fun in any situation. But those who view her as just a silly, nonsensical girl will miss out on the fiercely loyal and brave friend that she is.

Seventeen (cont'd)

Seventeen came from a poor family of hill folk, and is the youngest of seventeen children. Her parents had run out of names by the time she was born, hence her numerical moniker. Seventeen was much younger than the majority of her siblings, so she was often ignored and left out. Because of this, she craves friendship and connection, which makes her eager to please. Seventeen never learned to distrust anybody, which can rub the more cynical campers the wrong way.

Growing up in a rural area, Seventeen has developed an affinity for woodland creatures and cares deeply for their health and happiness, even going so far as to found the Camp Weedonwancha Animal Preservation Society (a group comprised of Malachi, Brian and herself), an organization tasked with ensuring that no harm should come to any critters, beasts, or varmints. Unlike Malachi, she almost always places the feelings of others before her own, and is motivated more by instinct rather than intellect. Because of an upbringing with limited social interactions, she's frequently confused by human behaviors, and other people are frequently confused by hers.

Though she's as compassionate as they come, she's also just as happy being an immature kid, and will most likely still be "playing pretend" long after she should have grown out of it.



Brian



Gentle giant, boy of few words, powder keg in a hoodie.

Brian may seem aloof, but that's just his stoic nature. He shows his friendship through action rather than words, always looking out for his two companions and serving sometimes as a bodyguard and confidant. There is nothing he can't or wouldn't do to help his friends, and not just because he's so big, but because his heart is big as well.

Brian (cont'd)



Brian is a hulking kid who towers over the majority of campers his age, which makes it all the more remarkable that so many of his actions go unnoticed. In stark contrast to Malachi, Brian seeks to help, but craves no recognition. He's big and strong, which can be intimidating, but he wouldn't hurt a fly. Unless that fly had in some way wronged his friends.

Brian can usually be seen standing just a bit further back from the other kids, staring into space with his hands in his hoodie's kangaroo pouch. But what he's really doing is watching over the camp, taking things in and making sure he's ready to step in to help if there's trouble. He may not always announce what he sees (in fact, he rarely ever speaks), but he always knows what's about to happen before the other kids catch on. Because he's so quiet, many of the campers don't see Brian for who he really is: an intelligent, observant boy with an emotional heart that he chooses not to wear on his sleeve.

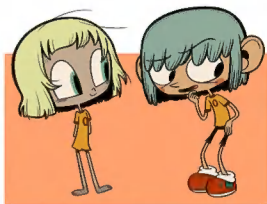
The product of a loud, aggressive, blue-collar family, Brian is himself prone to anger, which is something he works very hard to suppress. You see, Brian is a bit of a bottler. He's calm and collected, until he isn't. It was this behavior that ultimately got him sent to Weedonwantcha. Most of the time he's successful in his struggle to keep a cool head, but the thing that always sets him off is an injustice done to someone he cares about.

The Trio

The interpersonal dynamics of Malachi, Brian, and Seventeen reveal deep bonds and mutual respect. While the trio mainly exists to have fun, they also offer each other things that are much more substantial.

MALACHI & SEVENTEEN

Malachi lives to impress people, and Seventeen is easily impressed. Malachi may believe himself the smarter of the two, but when it comes to emotional intelligence she's got him beat. Seventeen may appear naive, but her good instincts frequently contradict Malachi's foolhardy behavior. Seventeen often questions Malachi's actions, but she's not passing judgment, she's genuinely interested in why he's made the choice he has. Malachi was an only child, and even though Seventeen was from a huge family, she may as well have been one too. But in each other, they've found a sibling-like bond they both cherish.



SEVENTEEN & BRIAN

Brian is there to quietly guide Seventeen to maturity. He recognizes her gentle soul, and wants to preserve that at all costs. Seventeen is also protective of Brian. When Brian loses his temper, Seventeen is the only one who can bring him back to earth. Brian is unlikely to say or do much to protect himself, and in those rare instances when he needs help, Seventeen will be right there. An injustice to Brian can cause Seventeen to react in a way that is very different to how we've come to know her.



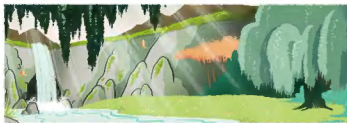
BRIAN & MALACHI

Brian's quiet handling of most intense situations results in Malachi becoming even more puffed up than he would normally be. While Malachi goes charging into a situation unprepared, Brian is more likely to stand back and survey the scene, and step in to intervene as soon as he's needed. Brian doesn't mind letting Malachi feel like the leader, and Malachi doesn't mind taking on that role every time. In Malachi, Brian has a friend that doesn't ask him to be anything other than who he is, which makes Brian feel safe and accepted.



The Camp

Camp Weedonwantcha is surrounded by all sorts of beautiful nature (which also keeps the campers from leaving). There are fishing docks and a canoe by the lake, caves to explore in the mountains, and humble structures such as the mess hall and library. There's also less pleasant areas, such as outhouse row and the deep woods. Beyond even there are the deep DEEP woods. Most kids don't venture there, with good reason.



The Camp (cont'd)

The camp is completely operated by the campers, and it shows. Because the kids are too interested in just having fun, certain things like upkeep are neglected and Camp Weedonwantcha isn't exactly up to code. Maintenance is handled by ■ small group of campers, and the repairs are both widespread and incredibly noticeable: poorly patched roofs, nails sticking out of railings, and random holes.

Apart from whatever items the kids have with them when they're dropped off, all of the supplies are delivered in "Drops", crates that fall from the sky, floating to the ground on an attached parachute. Unfortunately, the contents of the Drops seem a little... unwanted. The type of food that comes in the Drops is never anyone's favorite: tapioca pudding (never chocolate), all-crust bread, and extra-pulp orange juice. The books that fill the library came from Drops as well, and they're the type of books you'd find in a Dollar Store dumpster: D-list celebrity autobiographies, out-of-date textbooks, and instruction manuals for antiquated technologies.

The thing about Drops, though, is that they sometimes have a way of teaching kids lessons, or function as a reward for when kids learn something about themselves and grow as a result.

One Drop in particular has had ■ lasting effect on the camp: A crate full of feral cats. Since they arrived, the cats have multiplied, become omnipresent, and are found in every corner of the camp.

Everything usually runs as it should, resulting in a more or less functional society. The only source of real tension is the divide between the kids who live in the main area of camp (the "Mainers"), and those who have made their home in the Ropes Course, which is located on the camp's outskirts. The Ropes Course kids are a little rough around the edges, full of angst, and disinclined to follow rules. The Ropes Course kids pride themselves on being self-sufficient and rarely have need to venture into the main camp, and the Mainers hope it stays that way.

Mainers

COLIN

The self-appointed counselor of Camp Weedonwantcha. Armed with his trusty whistle (a memento taken from his football coach father), Colin roams the grounds of Weedonwantcha pointing out rules violations wherever he sees them, which is everywhere. Colin and Malachi frequently bump heads, as Colin routinely interferes with Malachi's latest projects. The only time Colin is willing to bend the rules is in the name of magic and illusion. He has a real passion for prestidigitation, a soft spot for sorcery, and is happiest when he gets to perform his magical feats.



LUCY

Lucy's biggest flaw is also her biggest strength: her hypersensitivity. Lucy feels everything five times more than the average kid. What one camper might see as "kinda sad" is a devastating tragedy to Lucy. But Lucy's also the most likely to laugh the longest and hardest when she's happy. Because she's constantly distracted by the events going on around her, she can come off as a little scatterbrained. She might not be the most helpful friend to have around if you're stuck down a hole or if you've just set a cabin on fire, but if you're looking for someone who will be incredibly happy, angry, or sad on your behalf, Lucy's the girl you want.



BRADEN

In a game of Tag, Braden is always "It." Sure, he's a little slow (both on foot and on the uptake), but he does his best not to let it get him down. He withstands whatever hardships are thrown at him, and does so with a tiny, mole-like smile. Though, there are times in which intense emotions will burst through the cracks of his happy-go-lucky facade. When his emotions get the best of him, he can always find his center by notching some wood, a seemingly boring task that nonetheless brings Braden great pleasure.



Ropes Course Kids

PURDY



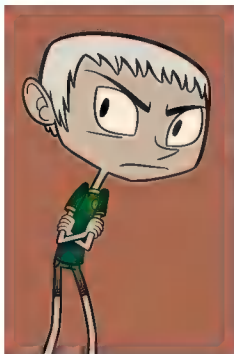
The de facto leader of the Ropes Course. She didn't have to fight her way into that position, she is just so naturally intimidating that other kids are awed and frightened by her. Purdy's main strength and flaw is that she is oblivious of her effect on others. She's not exactly mean on purpose, but is driven by selfish impulses and the need to escape boredom at all times. Because she has a difficult time understanding others, she reacts very badly when anybody opposes her in any way. Because of her histrionic nature, she thrives far better at Weedonwantcha than she ever did, or would have, in the real world.

LUMPY

Lumpy is the ultimate toady. He worships Purdy, and would do anything for her. Lumpy respects power, but has no commanding abilities of his own, and so he puts all his time and energy into idolizing the one person who can be everything he can't. His loyalty is unfaltering, but on his own he loses his identity and can spiral out of control.



Ropes Course Kids



RANDALL

Randall is not a nice kid. He's power-hungry and egotistical. His ultimate desire is to usurp Purdy as the Ropes Course alpha, and to ultimately take over the entire camp. He may have even accomplished this already, if only he could get anyone to like him.

TANNER

Extremely rambunctious and reckless. Tanner has a history of surrounding himself with bad influences, so he fell in with the Ropes Course kids very soon after arriving at Weedonwantcha. Unlike the rest of the Ropes Course kids, Tanner doesn't dislike the Mainers, and in fact spends most of his time socializing with them. In time, the Mainers will show Tanner just how good a kid he really is.



Pairs

KENNEDY & MARTA



Seventeen's bunkmates, until they grew tired of her positive attitude and childish behavior. Cynical and sarcastic, they are always there to shake a person's confidence. Motivated by the deep-down fear that people won't accept them, they've developed the defense mechanism of rejecting people outright.

STEVE & STEVEN

Two of the biggest liars you'll ever meet, Steve and Steven are inseparable friends locked in a constant battle of one-upmanship. Despite being younger and smaller, Steve is always just slightly ahead of Steven in the power struggle. This might be because, according to him, he has a double black belt in karate (an honor that his sensei had never given before or since).



GWEN & LIESEL

Twin sisters with a gift for disturbing people. They share a deep bond that most people, including themselves, mistake for a psychic connection. They believe that they possess telekinetic powers. They do not. Neither of them have ever had a friend that wasn't their twin sister, and they want it to stay that way.

“Staff”

FRED

Camp Weedonwantcha's head chef. He's everything his food isn't: Sweet, gentle, and not likely to cause stomach issues. He loves to cook for everyone, and derives great joy and purpose from doing so. Like anybody who has devoted themselves to a craft, he can become overly passionate if something gets in his way. Unfortunately for Fred, he's about as threatening as a kitten.



LINUS

Head librarian of the Camp Weedonwantcha Library. At 17 years old, he is one of the oldest campers at Weedonwantcha. He's also one of the quietest and most timid, making the library the perfect place for him. Linus can withstand Malachi at his most boastful and blowhard-y, which makes him one of Malachi's favorite people.



THEO & ANDREA

At a camp without any adults, lots of stuff gets broken. Luckily, there's Andrea and her assistant Theo. They're Weedonwantcha's fix-it crew... because they found the tool belts first. Their repair know-how may be limited, but their confidence isn't.



Avery
romantic



Other Campers

Benjy
cretin



Dustin **Kate**
hypochondriac wannabe doctor



Jeremy
popular kid



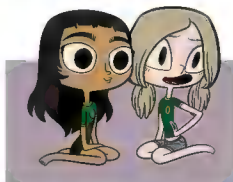
Ivan
doesn't know his
looks like a ~~man~~



Protokid
camper, creature, legend



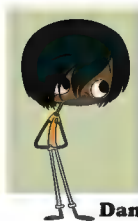
Olivia
daydreamer



Lori and Anne
besties



Russell
bush lurker



Dani
former pop star



Lewis
amateur artist



Darla
bug eater



Neiman
creepy creep

The Show

Each 11-minute episode will work as ■ satisfying piece of entertainment, but there will be a sense of continuity, story threads that pop up throughout ■ season, as well as the occasional multi-episode story arc. The overall tone of the show is humorous and fun, but sometimes episodes will explore more challenging themes, such as sadness or loss.

While the premise of the show is fantastical and the design style is cartoony, the majority of the acting and animation in the show would be representative of how real kids behave. Hyper or exaggerated animation would be saved for the more intense or emotional scenes, which will contrast with the normal mood and add to the intensity and fun of the stories.

Episodes will primarily revolve around the trio of Malachi, Brian and Seventeen, with the focus sometimes landing on one or two of them specifically. Weedonwancha's other campers exist mostly as a complement to the trio, but, as time goes on, they will have a larger role in the show. Episodes will delve into their lives, allowing for a larger group of characters for viewers to relate to and become invested in.

The show will make use of flashbacks to offer glimpses of what life was like for the campers before arriving at Weedonwancha. These moments will show how and why the campers have found themselves at camp, and explore why the campers behave the way they do. And in the vein of classic fairy tales, they will feature evil parents and adults, death, and intense moments of peril.

Our goal is to create a show that appeals to children who will enjoy watching kids in outlandish situations doing funny kid things, while also appealing to an older audience by turning a nostalgic, critical eye on what it means to be a child: The hubris, the boundless joy, the complex feelings. And even when episodes deal with darker themes, the takeaway feeling will be one of hope. Because we will see a group of otherwise unwanted misfits come together as friends, as ■ society. And they will thrive not in spite of, but because of the fact they are all different and unique.

Episodes

Bunk

Seventeen's cabin is taken over by bears, leading to a rescue mission to save her prized stuffed animal before it becomes bear food.

Malachi is showing Brian and Seventeen all of the improvements and decorating he's done to his cabin. Seventeen's bunkmates Kennedy and Marta approach in a huff. They're furious with Seventeen because her practice of leaving food out for animals has led to their cabin being taken over by bears. Seventeen apologizes and asks where they'll live now. Kennedy and Marta say she's on her own and they leave. Malachi invites her to stay with him until the bears move out of her cabin. As an only child, Malachi never had the opportunity to share a room with anyone. He figures it'll be fun!

Later: Malachi is not having fun. Seventeen has been rearranging his stuff and getting into everything. Wanting to be a gracious host, Malachi does his best to be patient (though he does start wondering to himself how long it will take for those bears to leave). He decides the best way to keep Seventeen out of trouble is to go to bed, so he suggests they call it an early night.

Malachi tries to sleep, but Seventeen can't settle down. After an onslaught of hypothetical questions ("Whatta ya think would be the worst part of owning a unicorn? Getting poked by its horn?") Malachi is finally able to convince Seventeen to get to sleep. "Okay. G'night, Malachi. G'night, Lovebug--- LOVEBUG!!!" Seventeen sits up with a start. In all the bear excitement, she completely forgot that the Lovebug, her favorite (and only) toy, is still in her old cabin. Seventeen tells Malachi that they need to get the Lovebug. Malachi assures Seventeen that the Lovebug has most likely been eaten, which sends her into an intense crying fit. Alerted by her walls, Brian arrives as if by teleportation. Brian, without hesitation, is willing to save the Lovebug. Seventeen calls Brian a hero. Malachi becomes motivated by the word "hero" being used to describe someone besides himself, and immediately appoints himself leader of the rescue mission. Feigning humility, Malachi says, "Seventeen, please don't call me a hero." "Okay." "Well, you can say it once..."

Malachi details an elaborate plan involving bear armor, honey bombs, and many explosions. Being familiar with Seventeen's scent, the bears will smell her coming from a mile away, so Malachi suggests that she stay far from the cabin and function as a lookout "in case the bears call for backup."

It's go time! Malachi and Brian (suited up in bear armor that looks decidedly worse than it did in Malachi's imagination) rush toward Seventeen's cabin. Pressing an ear to the door, Malachi hears the bears "giggling in there." Upon hearing the giggling, Brian walks straight into the cabin. "Brian! Stick to the plan!" Malachi follows behind, crawling on his hands and knees, and discovers... Kennedy and Marta. He can't believe his eyes. "What are you doing in here? Don't you know this cabin is filled with bears?!" It is soon revealed that Kennedy and Marta made the whole story up in an effort to get rid of Seventeen, because she was an annoying

bunkmate. Malachi is incensed. "Anyone would be lucky to have Seventeen as a bunkmate!" He demands the Lovebug and is shocked by its tattered appearance. The smell isn't great either.

Once Seventeen is reunited with the Lovebug, Malachi tells her that it doesn't look like the bears will ever be leaving, and that she should consider his cabin her new forever home.

Colin's Whistle

Malachi steals Colin's whistle, but experiences guilt after seeing the sadness his prank has caused.

Malachi is practicing his jumping. He leaps over a stick held inches from the ground by Brian and Seventeen. Malachi is basking in his glory when-- FWEEEEEP! It's Colin, the self-proclaimed camp counselor blowing his trusty whistle. "Jumping over a stick being held by two other people is against camp rules! I am in no mood for this right now. I've had to deal with almost a dozen rule violations just today! Laughing while running, unsupervised friendship circles, hiding AND seeking!" Colin tells Malachi to shape up, then leaves. Seventeen drops the stick. "Sorry, Malachi. I really wanted to see your grand finale, but rules are rules." Malachi says, "That's it. This time Colin's gone too far! He's constantly hassling everyone here at camp, and now he's depriving my friends of witnessing my jumping! It's time someone does something about this." Malachi devises a plan to ensure that never again will any camper suffer under the tyranny of Colin and his whistle.

It's nighttime. Malachi stands outside of Colin's cabin. Under the cover of darkness, Malachi climbs through Colin's window (landing with a thud) and sneaks across the room to Colin's bed (stubbing his toe against the bed frame). Colin is fast asleep with the whistle in his mouth, his snores creating tiny fweeps. Malachi steals the whistle and exits.

The next day, Malachi shows Brian and Seventeen what he's done. Brian and Seventeen are shocked by Malachi's thieving, but he says it's just a temporary thing meant to teach Colin a lesson. "Now I gotta hide it somewhere Colin won't find it. Although..." Holding the whistle in his hand, Malachi feels powerful. He begins describing a perfect Weedonwantcha. One in which he is in charge. "And you, Brian and Seventeen, will have the greatest job of all! You will build the statues. One of me, and one of the whistle!" Brian snatches the whistle from Malachi's hand. Malachi hisses, but the color soon returns to his face and he begins to think clearly. He agrees that Brian and Seventeen should hide the whistle, and he shouldn't know the location. "And when you're done, we can finally get to my grand finale."

While Brian and Seventeen are hiding the whistle, Malachi goes to tell the other campers what he's done. He finds a group of campers with Colin, who's sitting quietly on a rock. Lucy tells Malachi, "Something terrible has happened. Somebody stole Colin's whistle!" Malachi notices that Colin is crying, and he is flooded with guilt. Colin (in flashback) tells Malachi the story of how he got the whistle. It originally belonged to Colin's dad, a football coach at his hometown high school. We see that Colin's father couldn't quite accept Colin's love for magic and illusion, and Colin was sent to Weedonwantcha to "learn what it

takes to be ■ leader." While Colin was being dropped off at camp, he grabbed the whistle from his dad's neck. He concludes, "And now someone stole it from me!" Malachi tries to play it cool, "But... who would do such a thing?" Lucy answers, "A creep, that's who! A real creep!" Malachi excuses himself to go do something that has absolutely nothing to do with the whistle. "Oh, before I go. Suppose someone found Colin's whistle. Would that person be, I don't know, a hero?" Lucy says "maybe," and that's good enough for Malachi.

Brian and Seventeen have found a good hiding spot near a cliff. Brian pushes a boulder aside and begins digging a hole. Seventeen holds the whistle. Brian is just about done when-- FWEEEEEP! "Digging holes is against camp rules." Seventeen's face is fixed in ■ serious expression of strength and power. Brian holds his hand out and takes slow steps toward her. FWEEEEEP! "Taking steps toward ■ counselor is against camp rules!" Brian holds his hands up to show that he's on her side. Seventeen begins a huge inhale for the fweep of a lifetime when a feral cat scurries by, causing Seventeen's focus to shift. Brian seizes the opportunity and grabs for the whistle. A struggle ensues, ending with the whistle glancing off the boulder, then falling over the cliff... with the boulder following close behind. The boulder lands on top of the whistle, crushing it. Malachi, having heard the boulder land, arrives on the scene. "There you are! I need Colin's whistle!" Brian lifts the boulder and Seventeen picks up the flattened whistle. "Here it is!"

They return to Colin and give him the whistle. Malachi explains that he thought giving the campers a break from Colin's rules would make the camp a better place. Colin is momentarily furious, but softens when he realizes that he too just wants the camp to be a better place. "And I see now that being ■ good leader sometimes means letting people be themselves." Using sleight of hand, he makes the crushed whistle disappear. The group of campers in the area see this and erupt in amazement. They demand to see more magic. Colin is overcome by joy and purpose.

Meanwhile, falling gently toward camp is a Drop containing "Whistles: Extra Shrii."

Roped In

After having a fight with Brian and Seventeen, Malachi is seduced by the anarchistic and lawlessness of the Ropes Course kids... until he finds himself on their bad side.

Malachi has gathered all members of the Camp Weedonwantcha Animal Preservation Society (i.e. Brian and Seventeen) to unveil his latest creation. "The Animal Preservation Society Monument!" He gestures toward a Malachi made of wood and rocks, ■ vaguely Brian-shaped pile of dirt, and a Seventeen with ■ bird nest for hair. Seventeen pointedly asks where Malachi got the bird nest. "Don't worry! I was very gentle when I set the eggs on the ground."

After being kicked out of the Society for endangering the eggs ("Rule number one is 'never put an animal in danger!'"), Malachi storms off into the woods. He wanders aimlessly and grumbles to himself, until he arrives in a part of camp he's never seen. He starts to step over a large pile of leaves in his path, then, "You know what? The new me breaks rules. The new me steps wherever I want!" Malachi steps in the pile of leaves and in the blink of an eye

finds himself dangling upside down in ■ trap. Purdy, an older girl Malachi has never met, steps out from behind the trees. "Oh, great, a Mainer." Malachi asks what a Mainer is and if he can come down now please. "Mainers are kids from the main part of camp. You know, losers. Rule followers." Malachi explains that he's no Mainer. Purdy laughs and cuts him down.

Purdy leads Malachi to her home: A ropes course, with ladders, trapeze swings, etc. Tree houses fill the trees, and rugged looking kids fill the tree houses. A group of them slide down ropes to meet the new kid. Purdy explains that at the Ropes Course, you can do whatever you want. (Though it's clear that the Ropes Course kids do whatever Purdy says.) Malachi is instantly enamored.

It's night time at the Ropes Course and Malachi is hanging out with his new friends, who are a little louder and more rowdy than Malachi is used to. He tries to become involved in the conversation, but is constantly talked over. He's not used to people not listening to him and tells someone to "stop talking for second." The mood of the party instantly changes. The air is filled with tension as the Ropes Course kids stare at him in furious wonder. Malachi, picking up on none of this, continues: "As I was *trying* to say..."

The Ropes Course kids surround Malachi. Purdy scruffs him and tells him that for trying to impose conversation rules, he's going to Rope Jail. All the Ropes Course kids cheer and whoop like a bunch of howler monkeys.

Seventeen and Brian don't like that Malachi's been gone so long, so they're tracking him through the forest. Brian inspects ■ shoe print. He pinches some of the surrounding dirt and takes ■ lick. Seventeen says, "Good idea, Brian. I'm hungry too." As she attempts to shove a fistful of dirt into her mouth, Brian stops her and points to the distance. Realizing they're near the Ropes Course, Seventeen says she just lost her appetite.

Brian and Seventeen approach cautiously and, peering through bushes, see Malachi bound in ■ big spider web of rope, with Lumpy standing guard. Brian and Seventeen run away with great speed.

Time passes and Malachi has lost all hope. He wishes he'd never left his friends. Lumpy marches past Malachi, still bound in the jail. He marches past once more, but Malachi has been replaced by the Malachi monument. Lumpy continues his march, noticing nothing.

Cut to a panicked Brian, holding a crying Malachi under one arm and Seventeen under the other, booking it full speed through the forest. Whoops and hollers start faint but grow louder, and we see that a crowd of Ropes Course kids are chasing behind and gaining on them. Seventeen lights up and points. They're almost back to the camp!

Brian crosses the border into the main camp. He faces the whooping crowd, led by Purdy. He gives Purdy a hard look. She tells Brian to hand over the prisoner. Lumpy chimes in, "Yeah, it's against the rules for prisoners to leave the Ropes Course!" Confused, Seventeen asks why the Ropes Course kids care that Malachi broke a rule. They are all stumped, causing them to retreat. But they warn the trio that they had better stay away from the ropes course forever... which is just fine with Malachi.

The Legend of Protokid

Malachi, Brian, and Seventeen attend a campfire where campers share stories of their encounters with Weedonwancha's mysterious shoe-stealing creature.

The trio have been invited to a campfire. They arrive at the fire pit, which Tanner, Fred, Lucy, and Steve & Steven are sitting around. Lucy lights up when she sees them arrive, "You're here! Yay! This is so great! Yaaaaay!"

In her excitement, Lucy steps onto a burning ember. She's brave for a moment, but then makes the mistake of looking at the tiny burn on her foot. Lucy freaks out, and Brian and Seventeen move to comfort her. Malachi, thinking he's being profound, explains that this wouldn't have happened if she'd been wearing shoes. He looks at everyone's bare feet and says, "It's really something you all should consider." He points to his shoes. "Me? My feet are protected *and* stylish." Everyone falls silent and shares secretive looks.

Tanner shrugs. "Eh, he'll learn on his own." Fred thinks they should warn Malachi, so he begins to tell the dramatic and horrifying story of PROTOKID!

Malachi asks, "Who's Protokid?" Fred says, "We don't know much about him. He's *mysterious*!" Fred goes on: Legend has it, he was the first kid dropped off at camp. Being alone for so long, he turned to the only friends he could find... his shoes. He now spends his nights stealing everyone else's shoes, or as he calls it, "making new friends." People say he sometimes burrows under the dirt using his paw-like hands, then just waits for someone to walk by so he can steal their shoes. His eyes glow, his teeth are sharp as push-pins, his overall hygiene is--

"It kinda sounds like you know a lot about him," Malachi says. "Look, I want to believe you, but I have ■ scientist's mind. Just like my dad. So I need proof. Hard evidence."

Lucy erupts. "Protokid is real!" A flashback begins: She tries to tell her story, but keeps getting sidetracked by nostalgia for her shoes. We see her moods changing in the look and tone of her flashback. The other campers steer her through the rest of the story. They learn that Lucy was taking a stroll at dusk. She removed her shoes to "really feel" the grass in a field. She'd only looked away for ■ moment (the flashback reveals she gets distracted by many things), and when she went to put them back on, they were gone.

Malachi offers: "That could have been a raccoon. Or a squirrel. Or a team of mice."

Steve looks around at the other kids with the weathered, serious expression of someone who's been to war. "I saw him once." Steven adds, "I saw him first, though." "Yeah, but I saw him *more*." Steve & Steven tell their own harrowing Protokid story that involves incredible feats of derring-do. However, the flashback reveals something much more mundane: they'd left their muddy shoes on their cabin's porch overnight. When they awoke, the shoes were gone. Steve finishes the story, "The worst part? Those were the shoes I wore when I played professional basketball."

Given Steve and Steven's history of untruths, Malachi remains unconvinced.

Tanner's had enough of Malachi's disbelief. Tanner tells his story. It's actually pretty scary and, for the first time, the flashback matches the tale: Tanner (the type of kid to be out in a forest at night) was out in a forest at night, when he got the feeling he was being followed. He turned quickly to see what it was, but saw nothing. Turning back, he stepped

into ■ tree branch, knocking him to the ground. Two glowing yellow eyes were staring down at him. The thing hissed, took Tanner's shoes, then disappeared into the darkness.

Malachi stands arms crossed. "I think I've solved the mystery of Protokid: He's really a bunch of people who are just jealous of my shoes."

Tanner challenges Malachi to walk back to his cabin alone, since he's so sure Protokid doesn't exist. Malachi accepts the challenge, after an audible gulp.

Malachi begins the long, dark walk back to his cabin. He pretends to be brave for ■ short while, but begins to pick up the pace when he hears the sounds of crackling leaves and sticks. Soon, he enters a desperate power walk. He breaks into a full run once the sounds get louder, screaming as he desperately tries to flee to safety.

"Malachi!" It's Seventeen and Brian. Malachi stops running, gasping for air and clutching his chest. "I heard sounds. I thought Proto-- someone was following me." "We were following you. We weren't gonna just let you walk back all alone." Malachi's embarrassed, but relieved, secure with the scientific knowledge that Protokid definitely doesn't exist.

As they head to the cabin together, a paw-like hand pulls away from Malachi's shoe and returns to ■ hole burrowed into the dirt.

What Day Is It?

After discovering that nobody at camp is keeping track of what day it is, Malachi attempts to find the truth before his birthday passes him by.

Malachi not-so-subtly informs Brian and Seventeen that his birthday is tomorrow. "Oh, it's your birthday?" "Yep. The 27th!" "Oh, then we missed it! Today's the 30th!" "But... February doesn't have a 30th." "What are you talking about? It's April!"

They decide to go ask around in the hope of finding the truth. They approach a group of kids and Malachi asks if anyone knows what the date is. Everyone shouts out contradictory dates. Neiman knows he's right about the date, because he keeps track using a rash he gets every ten days. Gwen and Liesel know it's actually May 21st, because they can feel May 21st's vibrations. Malachi decides to go hunting around for some *actual* information.

They first go to the library to see if Linus gives due dates for the books the library lends. The kids peruse the bookshelves while Linus retrieves his ledger. (Malachi inspects a potentially interesting book called *Advanced Top Hat Techniques*.) Linus presents his ledger but, unfortunately, the due dates are all "Whenever You Feel Like It." Linus shrugs. He's not comfortable telling people what to do.

Next, they head over to the mess hall to see if they can get any information from expiration dates. Unfortunately, Fred removes those immediately. He explains that if people saw those, they'd never eat his cooking. Malachi picks up a box of macaroni and cheese just to check, and Fred grabs it from his hands quickly. "Don't touch that! I'm saving that for a special occasion!"

Malachi can't believe that nobody's been keeping track of the days. Braden overhears and says that he uses notches to keep track of days. They run to Braden's cabin. Upon arriving, they find a wooden man-shaped sculpture that's covered in notches. "Are these the notches you were talking about?" "Oh, no. That's Notchman. I made him using this wood glue Theo gave me." Malachi's more interested in the notches that will put an end to this date mystery. Braden points to the wall. It's covered in notches. "There you go, one for every day I've been here." It takes a while, but Malachi counts every notch. "Okay, now I just need to know the date of when you got dropped off." Braden stares blankly. "That? I have no idea."

Malachi starts feeling sorry for himself. He can't believe he's gonna miss out on ■ birthday and, more importantly, a birthday party. Seventeen doesn't see what the big deal is. "I've never had a birthday and I'm fine." Malachi can't believe that someone can actually not care about birthdays. Birthdays (especially his) are the most important day of the year! He looks at Seventeen and suddenly a sad look comes across his face. If it's okay with them, he'd like to be left alone for a little while.

When Brian and Seventeen come back to the cabin later that night, they don't find a moping Malachi like they expected. The whole cabin is decorated and he's been waiting for them to return. "Surprise!!!" "Malachi, you made me a birthday party?" "Even better, it's a *joint* birthday party! For you and me! And look, I made you a present!"

Cut to Linus: He notices that a page is missing from his library book ledger.

Cut to Braden: "Okay, Notchman, your bald days are over. Let's get that hair glued on..." He notices that his wood glue is gone.

Cut to Fred: Something catches his eye. The macaroni and cheese box... it's open! He walks slowly toward it and looks in. "Oh, my g--"

Cut back to Malachi: "It's a macaroni picture! Happy birthday!"

Stickrocked

After being hit in the head by ■ wild pitch, an unconscious Malachi lives out his fantasy of widespread recognition. Meanwhile, the other campers do their best to revive him.

It's time for stickrock! A group of campers have assembled for a game and the energy at the stickrock field is electric. Malachi has yet to show any real stickrock ability - he's never even made it to first dirt lump (the stickrock version of ■ base) - and he's becoming frustrated with the sport. "I don't understand this. My dad was a gifted athlete! I should have the goods." Seventeen says that stickrock is really just about having fun with your friends. Malachi excuses this as loser talk.

It's Malachi's turn at bat, and he readies himself for Seventeen's pitch. She throws ■ real heater his way and, to the surprise of many, he knocks it deep into the forest. He is lifted up by the other campers and they chant his name. Suddenly, there's a rustling in the bushes. Out steps a man dressed smartly in a nice suit and top hat, and bearing a striking resemblance to a man on a book cover Malachi saw previously in the library. He introduces himself as Rupert Moneybags, world's top stickrock agent. He's never seen such ■ mighty

stickrock hit and he wants Malachi to join the National Stickrock Team. "What do you say, Malachi? Malachi? Malachi?" asks Rupert as he pats Malachi on the cheek. Repeatedly.

Cut to reveal Malachi knocked out with ■ huge bump on his head, the campers attempting to wake him by smacking him gently on the cheek and saying his name. "Malachi? Malachi?" Having thrown the pitch that hit Malachi in head, Seventeen is racked with guilt.

In Malachi's head: Malachi bids farewell to Brian and Seventeen. Seventeen gives Malachi her lucky stickrock bat to remember her by. The three of them hug, then Malachi joins Rupert on his private jet. Malachi looks out his window as Weedonwantcha shrinks in the distance. "Now, we're going straight to the championship game. It's halfway through, and our team is losing. We're counting on you to turn things around. I don't think I need to tell you how serious this is." Rupert farts and, being a gentleman, quickly apologizes. Malachi surreptitiously waves the smell away from his nose.

At camp: The kids waft a feral cat's rear end beneath Malachi's nose, à la smelling salts. Malachi does not respond.

In Malachi's head: Malachi steps up to bat at the championship. Everyone in the stadium is on their feet, cheering him on. The pitcher throws ■ rock with incredible speed. Using Seventeen's lucky bat, Malachi smashes the rock into the cheap seats. Malachi rounds the bases and is surrounded by his ecstatic team. He looks into the stands and, seeing no familiar faces, wears a melancholy expression. Just then, his teammates dump ■ cooler of sports drink over his head.

At camp: Having just thrown ■ bucket of water in his face, the kids plot their next move. Seventeen asks if there's anything else they can do? Kennedy says there's one last option. But she'll need Brian and Seventeen to go fetch several items. They leave with great urgency. Kennedy turns to the group. "Okay, now that they're gone, let's dig a grave."

In Malachi's head: Malachi sits alone in the locker room, holding Seventeen's lucky stickrock bat. Rupert enters and starts telling Malachi about all the places he'll go and things he'll see. Malachi asks if he can go see his friends. "Heavens no, boy! You're a champion. You won't be seeing those losers again!" Malachi finds this unacceptable, and rushes past Rupert. He says he'll run back to Weedonwantcha if he has to. He races down ■ long hallway, through a door and...

At camp: Malachi wakes up. He's lying in ■ shallow grave, holding a daisy. He's confused, but ignores the weirdness of the situation when he sees Brian and Seventeen, returning from their fool's errand. He greets them enthusiastically. Seventeen is apologetic, "I'm so glad you're awake. After I hit you with that pitch I thought you'd never--" "Wait, you hit me with a pitch? That means I get to go to first dirt lump!"

A Boy and His Friend Dressed Up Like A Dog

Seventeen pretends to be a dog to fulfill a camper's dream, and is delighted by all of the attention she receives.

Seventeen is leading Brian and Malachi in the latest Animal Preservation Society project (a set of condos for some of Weedonwancha's smaller creatures to inhabit) when a stick flies into their area, nearly hitting them. Braden arrives shortly thereafter. "Sorry about that. I was playing fetch and the stick got away from me." Malachi suggests that a game of fetch might be better if, say, Braden had a dog. This causes Braden to begin weeping. It was always a dream of his to have a dog, but his family would never allow it. He tried playing fetch with some feral cats, but they weren't into it. Braden leaves.

Seventeen is moved by Braden's story and decides to make his dream come true. She asks Malachi if he could oversee the condo development for the time being. Seeing this as a real opportunity to demonstrate his value to the Society, he agrees. Seventeen runs off, saying she won't be gone for long.

Later, Braden is again playing fetch. He throws the stick across the field, only this time he doesn't have to fetch it himself. Seventeen the Dog comes running toward him on all fours. She's got her hair in pigtails to resemble dog ears, a dirt spot over one eye, and the fetching stick in her mouth.

At first, Braden doesn't know what to think. But Seventeen the Dog arf-arfs and runs in excited circles, encouraging him to throw the stick. Braden giggles and throws the stick, and Seventeen the Dog follows right behind it.

Braden loves Seventeen the Dog. He wants to show all the other campers, so he takes her for a walk. Everyone else loves Seventeen the Dog too. Seventeen has a flashback in which several of her siblings reject her. "Get outta here!" "Go away!" Now she's surrounded by campers kneeling down and beckoning her with cries of "C'mere girl!" "Come to me!" Seventeen the Dog is euphoric.

Malachi is starting to feel in over his head with the condos. Seventeen shows up and asks how it's going. "Everything's going great!" he says as the condo he's working on collapses. Malachi faux-casually asks if she's back to take over, but Seventeen's not ready to give up her amazing life as a dog. She loves the attention, she loves the games, "and I love being able to go to the bathroom wherever I want!" Malachi notices that Seventeen's knee is skinned, which causes Brian to become alarmed. "Relax! I just got a little carried away playing fetch with everybody!" She leaves, and Malachi tries to figure out how to fix the condo situation.

Seventeen the Dog returns to Braden. "There's my girl!" Seventeen runs to him, but it's soon apparent that the other campers have Seventeen the Dog fever, and everyone wants a piece of her. "Come here, girl, over here!" "No, she likes me best. Come on, this way!" Seventeen doesn't like having to choose. She's starting to get nervous. One kid is yelling at her to do a trick. Another kid attempts to collar her. It's too much. The kids start yelling, and Seventeen is trapped cowering in the middle, as two kids above her fight over who gets to throw the stick. A huge hand comes in and grabs the stick, quickly stopping the fight. It's Brian. Everyone tries to get out of the way as he rears back to throw the stick. He flings it, hard. Seventeen smiles gratefully at her friend before bolting as fast as she can.

Cut back to Malachi, who is staring in disbelief at the disaster that is his attempt at a condo. Suddenly Seventeen is beside him helping out, dirt smudge gone and hair back to normal. She apologizes for neglecting the project. She says that "it was just nice to feel

wanted." Malachi says, "Are you kidding? We don't just want you, we need you! Look at this mess that happened when you were gone!" Seventeen smiles and says she's glad to be herself again, and that "being a dog is a big responsibility."

Lake It or Not

Malachi and Seventeen find themselves stranded in a canoe in the middle of the lake, and Brian must overcome his fear of swimming to save his friends.

Malachi, Seventeen and Brian are at the lake. Malachi reserved the canoe for the day and is looking forward to hitting the water with his friends. Kennedy and Marta return to shore from their canoe outing. They leave the canoe, but take the paddles. Malachi reminds them that he called dibs on the canoe. "But you didn't say anything about the paddles. Byeeee." Brian just shrugs like "oh well what can you do" and turns to leave. Malachi refuses to let this ruin their day. "Wait here." He runs to the stickrock field, and grabs two shovels sitting next to an empty shallow grave. "These'll work."

Malachi returns with his makeshift paddles, gets in the canoe, and invites Seventeen and Brian to join him. Seventeen gets in, but Brian steps away. He shakes his head and waves them away. They try convincing him, but after a while they shove off without him.

With great effort, Malachi and Seventeen shovel their way through the lake. They stop and take a moment to see how far out they are. Malachi says, "Look at Brian. He looks so small. Like a--" Seventeen interrupts, "Giant bug." "Yep. He looks just like a giant bug." "No, Malachi, there's a giant bug on your shovel!" Malachi looks at the handle of his shovel, sees the bug, shrieks and throws the shovel as far as he can. The shovel sinks quickly from the surface. "Lemme see if I can reach it with mine," Seventeen says. She leans over the side of the canoe, reaches her shovel deep into the water, then sits back up with no shovel. "Welp, dropped mine too."

A group of beavers start circling the canoe. Seventeen feels relieved. "Oh, look! Our beaver friends have come to help us back to shore!" Her hopes are shattered with a chomp as one of the beavers takes a bite out of the canoe.

Brian sits on the shore, staring out into the water. He picks up a rock and throws it into the lake. As it plops into the water, he flashes back to when he was younger and was learning how to swim. His lesson consisted of being thrown into a lake and left to fend for himself. He struggled and struggled to get above water, choking out "Help!" whenever he could. "Help! Help!" HEEEEELP! Brian is snapped back to reality by the cries of Malachi and Seventeen. He springs to action, trying to come up with a way to save them that doesn't involve getting in the lake.

Back on the canoe, Malachi and Seventeen try splashing water in the beavers' faces, but it only makes them more angry, more eager.

Cut to the Ropes Course, where Randall's explaining a thing or two to Lumpy. "Until Purdy comes back, I'm in charge, you got that?" They notice Brian grabbing whatever rope he can get his hands on. "Hey, you're not supposed to be here!" Brian ignores them and

continues gathering. "Hey, I'm talkin' to you!" Randall grabs Brian's shoulder. Brian turns and greets Randall with an angry, red-eyed glare. Randall shrinks. "Do you need any help, sir?"

Brian runs back to the lake carrying an incredible length of rope. He ties one end around his waist, the other to a rock. He grabs a nearby stick, tosses the rock in the air, and with amazing power, hits the rock toward the canoe.

Malachi looks up and sees the rock heading their way. "Yes! Brian you just saved our--" Thunk! The rock hits Malachi on the head (knocking him out) and bounces into the water. Brian pulls the rope back. In the distance, he sees Seventeen attempting to fend off the beavers all alone. With a determined look, he takes a deep breath. He removes the rock and ties that end of rope around a tree and runs into the lake. He begins dog paddling with the strength of an Iditarod sled team. He reaches the canoe and climbs in. Pulling on the rope attached to the tree, the canoe starts cruising back to shore, leaving the beavers in the rearview.

Back at the ropes course, Purdy arrives to find it virtually rope-free. She demands to know who was in charge, and Randall tells her the truth: It was Lumpy.

The Hunt for Dad Cat - Part 1

While the rest of camp is focused on building the biggest bonfire in Camp Weedonwantcha history, Malachi, Brian, and Seventeen try to find the father of a litter of kittens.

Tanner realizes that the empty Drop crates could be used as the basis of a gigantic bonfire. Word spreads fast, and the campers begin grabbing whatever wood they can find (twigs, benches, warning signs) to add to the pile.

Seventeen is eager to participate, so she pulls up one of the steps to their cabin. Under the step, the trio is stunned to find a mother cat and her kittens. The trio are instantly enamored by the kittens. (Malachi is specifically fond of an orange kitten who is constantly yelling.) Seventeen can't wait for the dad cat to return and complete the cat family. Malachi tells her that the dad cat won't be returning. This infuriates Seventeen. She decides to find the dad cat, so she can give him a piece of her mind. Malachi tells her that she'll never find the dad cat... without his help. They set off to find the dad cat.

Malachi (carrying himself like Sherlock Holmes) announces that he's uncovered their first clue to finding the dad cat: Malachi Jr's coloring. "Who's Malachi Jr?" "The kitten. I named him." If Malachi Jr's fur is orange, and the mother's fur is grey, the dad's fur must be orange. They split up to find an orange cat. Malachi happens upon one and, after a brief struggle, apprehends him. "A-ha! I told you I would find him," Malachi says to Brian and Seventeen who are... also each holding an orange cat. They return to their cabin so that the mom cat can tell them which cat is the dad.

After the mom cat hisses and spits at all three potential dad cats (sending them all running), Malachi begins to worry that they need more information. Just then, Neiman, creep that he is, creeps out from under their cabin. He says he saw the mom cat and the dad

cat...together... a few months ago when Neiman was hanging out near (and in) Malachi's cabin. "The dad cat is missing an ear." Malachi is so elated to have a new clue that he completely overlooks the fact that Neiman regularly lurks around the cabin.

The trio heads to the bonfire structure, which is by this point enormous, to ask around about one-eared cats. Seventeen and Brian are in awe, but Malachi is completely focused on finding the dad cat. He approaches Tanner, who's overseeing the building of the bonfire, and begins interrogating him. Tanner tells Malachi that he needs to look in the deep woods, which is swarming with cats.

More determined than ever, Malachi starts marching off toward the woods. Seventeen asks if they could stick around to have fun with the other campers. "Seventeen, finding the dad cat was your idea in the first place!" "I know, but...the dad's already left once, why would he stick around a second time?" "Once he sees how great Malachi Jr. is, he'll want to stay!" She tells him she's going to stay and help out. Malachi, as is his style, stomps off alone toward the deep woods. Seventeen is worried about him going to the woods by himself, but Malachi tells her he's not a baby. "And besides, the deep woods aren't scary until dark."

While walking through the deep woods, Malachi sees a pair of glowing yellow, potentially-cat eyes in a nearby bush. He coaxes the creature out... it's a kid? He's covered in dirt and doesn't look 100% human. (Malachi doesn't realize that this stranger is, in fact, Protokid.) Malachi's at first startled to find another camper out in the deep woods, but he steadies himself. "I'm looking for cats. What are you doing out here?" "Looking for cats." "Have you seen many?" "Seen many." (Protokid has a case of echolalia, but Malachi doesn't realize that either.) Malachi urges Protokid to lead the way to the cats, and they start heading deeper into the woods.

The Hunt for Dad Cat - Part 2

After his obsession with finding the dad cat leaves Malachi stranded in the deep woods, it's up to Brian and Seventeen to bring their friend back to camp.

Malachi and Protokid are walking through the woods. Malachi explains that he's looking for a dad cat for a friend of his. Malachi feels it's very important to have a dad in your life. "My dad is a genius, by the way." He then rants about his friends and how they abandoned him to build a big dumb fire at the lake. The mention of the fire piques Protokid's interest.

They come to a stop at a burrow. Protokid points at the burrow's entrance. "Oh, the cats are in there?" "Cats are in there." Malachi crawls into the burrow, but instead of cats, it's full of shoes. It dawns on Malachi that the legends were true, and he is in the presence of Protokid. Malachi turns around just as Protokid tries to snatch his shoes. Malachi manages to escape and starts running through the woods. In his panic, he trips on a tree root and goes tumbling down a large hill. When he gets up and shakes himself off, he finds himself in the middle of a forest even denser and darker than before. It's scary, but there is one good thing about it... it's infested with cats.

Back at the camp, Seventeen and Brian are looking for wood in a supply shed. Seventeen's nose leads her to two very old metal cans with pictures of flames on them. She sniffs the liquid within fondly, saying that it smells just like the stuff her brothers and sisters used to make back home. The nice thing to do would be to bring them back to the bonfire in case anyone gets thirsty.

In the woods, Malachi inspects as many cats as he can, but none of them meet the dad cat's description. The severity of his situation hits him: He can't find the cat, doesn't know how to get back to camp, and darkness is enveloping him. He soon notices other strange things about the area. There are discarded items everywhere: backpacks, articles of tattered clothing... How did they get here? Were they abandoned? Does someone live here? Malachi doesn't want to find out.

He'll be safer in a tree. He climbs one, settles into some branches and curls up into a ball. Not being able to find the dad cat is just one in a long line of failures for Malachi. He flashes back to a moment before camp. Malachi's been conducting science experiments and has nearly burned down the house. His mother scolds him for never thinking. "But I was thinking! I was doing science, like you said Dad would do!" "Malachi, the difference is your dad was a genius, and you're not."

Back at camp, the kids are calling it a day on the bonfire construction. Seventeen mentions to Brian that she's worried that Malachi hasn't gotten back from the deep woods yet. She asks Tanner if he's seen Malachi. "Good joke, Seventeen! You and Brian wouldn't even let Malachi walk to his cabin alone. You think I'd believe you'd let him go to the deep woods?" He says goodnight and walks off laughing. Brian and Seventeen give each other guilty, worried looks. Suddenly, a strange voice starts talking to them. "Malachi not in deep woods." It's Protokid. Seventeen peps up. "Oh, that's good!" "Malachi in deep, DEEP woods." Seventeen looks worried again. "Well, how long till he comes back?" "He won't."

Seventeen and Brian are really worried now. Seventeen suddenly thinks back to her memory from before camp: her family's moonshine still exploding, attracting all sorts of attention. She knows they have to start the bonfire to save Malachi. Seventeen urges Brian on as he empties the metal cans onto the pile. Brian starts rubbing two sticks together as fast as he can, with Seventeen watching in desperation.

Cut back to Malachi, pathetically huddled in the tree, the color leaving his face. FOOM! His eyes open wide as he's suddenly surrounded by hot, orange light. Everything for a moment is illuminated, and behind Malachi, for just a brief moment, we see an orange cat with only one ear. Malachi sits up and sees a humongous explosion in the distance.

Arriving at camp, Malachi observes all the excited campers running in to see the bonfire. After a moment, he turns and walks away. He goes to his cabin, where he finds the mother cat and her sleeping kittens. He picks up Malachi Jr. and apologizes for not being able to find his dad. Malachi confesses that he never met his dad either, and he knows that can feel lonely. But it's going to be okay, because Malachi Jr. has Malachi "and we both have Brian and Seventeen."

Malachi finds Brian and Seventeen at the bonfire. Their bangs and eyebrows have been singed off, but they're thrilled that her friend is okay. Seventeen hugs him and tells him she's so happy he's at camp. Malachi looks around and sees all the campers together, thrilled to be at a giant lakeside campfire, being themselves. "You know what, Seventeen? I'm glad to be here too."